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LETTER DATED 3 SEPTEMBER 1999 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

As you are aware, on 5 May 1999, Portugal, Indonesia and the United Nations concluded a set of agreements intended to resolve the long-standing issue of East Timor (A/53/951-S/1999/513, annexes). These 5 May agreements requested the Secretary-General to determine, through a popular consultation based upon a universal, direct and secret ballot, whether the East Timorese people would accept or reject a proposed special autonomy for East Timor within the unitary Republic of Indonesia.

I am pleased to inform you that the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) has now completed the popular consultation. The results, and the consultation process as a whole, have also been duly certified by the Electoral Commission. I therefore have the honour to report to you that 94,388 (21.5 per cent) votes were cast in favour of the proposed special autonomy framework and 344,580 (78.5 per cent) votes were cast against it. Thus, the people of East Timor have rejected the proposed special autonomy and expressed their wish to begin a process of transition towards independence.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Security Council for the steadfast support it has given UNAMET since its inception. The 5 May agreements call for a peaceful and orderly transfer of authority in East Timor to the United Nations. This task will be complex and difficult, especially given the current insecurity in the Territory. I am confident that the United Nations, and indeed the people of East Timor, can continue to depend upon the support of the members of the Council in the coming months.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN

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